

Title: "Saving the best of the coveys": sport in the novels of Jane Austen

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Although sport would seem to serve a minor purpose in the novels of Jane Austen, field sports, exercise, and the playing of games serve as background to the country lives of many of Austen's characters, her men in particular. From young Catherine Morland's preference of cricket and "base ball" over dolls (1) and books, (2) in *Northanger Abbey*, to Charles Musgrove's avid interest in shooting in *Persuasion*, sport figures in each Austen novel, often linked in subtle ways to courtship, though perhaps Mr. Elton's "court ship" riddle in *Emma* was not very subtle word play, even if Emma Woodhouse managed to misread its message! The manner in which men pursue field sports, particularly hunting and shooting (3) or talk about them, also seems to reveal something about their characters, as with John Thorpe's bragging about his hunters in *Northanger Abbey*. Similarly, in *Sense and Sensibility*, John Willoughby may be a good shot, but he also "sports with" (4) Marianne Dashwood's affections, as her sister Elinor asserts. *Pride and Prejudice* has its share of sport as well, from the gambling Wickham pursuing Lydia Bennet to the ever-hopeful Mrs. Bennet assuring Mr. Bingley that her husband will "save all the best of the coveys" for him. As in this novel, shooting/hunting seasons and courting season often coincide in the works of Jane Austen.

Although biographer Claire Tomalin suggests Austen was "likely to take up boys' games" (5) as a child, à la Catherine Moreland, because her father boarded some of the boys he taught at school when she was young, there is little evidence outside the pages of *Northanger Abbey* to support such suppositions. (6) She did apparently have good hand-eye coordination, based on her feats at "bilbocatch," (7) and she enjoyed taking part in games with her nephews and nieces, including battledore and shuttlecock, reporting in a letter of 1805 that she had been practicing with six-year-old nephew William and they had "frequently kept it up three times, & once or twice six" (109). The Austen men, father George, brothers Henry, Edward, Frank, and Charles, (8) as well as various nephews and neighbors, were mostly avid about field sports. Jane's letters to her sister Cassandra, in particular, often include news of her brothers/nephews' sporting endeavors, sometimes satirically, sometimes not. In a letter from 1796, dated September 1 the traditional opening day for partridge season (9), Jane jokes to Cassandra, "there are a prodigious number of birds hearabouts this

year, so that perhaps 1 may kill a few" (7). Two weeks later, she reports that Edward and Frank "went out yesterday very early in a couple of Shooting Jackets, & came home like a couple of Bad Shots, for they killed nothing at all. They are out again to day, & are not yet returned--Delightful Sport! They are just come home; Edward with two Brace, Frank with his two and a half. What amiable Young Men!" (Le Faye 10). Austen may joke with her sister, and presumably with the brothers, about the two "Bad Shots" who come home empty-handed, but her humorous judging of them as "amiable Young Men" based on their bagging nine birds is interesting, considering even in jest she attributes a good character trait, being "amiable," to the success of these sportsmen. Austen will play with the same sorts of moral judgments of male sporting characters in particular in her early novels. Since her early novels, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *Northanger Abbey* (1818), all were drafted and revised long before publication, dating of Austen compositions is difficult of course, not to mention dating when sporting scenes were developed in them. I, therefore, propose to examine these three novels first, followed by the novels drafted in the later years, *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), and *Persuasion* (1818). Just as Austen's style and themes altered to some degree from the earlier novels, so too did her use of sport in them, both in terms of sophistication and in terms of its importance to underlying themes in the novels.

Hunting and shooting are referenced on numerous occasions in Austen's juvenilia--a young lover sending for his hunters to prolong a visit, for example, in "Lady Susan" (10) or, more satirically, in "Sir William Montague," the fiance choosing to lose his bride because he will not wed on opening day (41)--so not surprisingly, in *Sense and Sensibility*, Marianne Dashwood's first suitor, Willoughby, is inevitably a skilled huntsman. When threatening weather forces Marianne to curtail a walk with younger sister Margaret to stimulate the sensibilities, the girls decide to race (11) each other:

One consolation however remained for them ... it was that of running with all possible speed down the steep side of the hill which led immediately to their garden gate. They set off. Marianne had at first the advantage, but a false step brought her suddenly to the ground, and Margaret, unable to stop herself to assist her, was involuntarily hurried along, and reached the bottom in safety. (41)

Marianne's unfortunate fall leads, of course, to the arrival of a true sportsman, Willoughby, to sweep her literally off her feet and carry her home. Naturally, the Dashwoods had arrived in "early September" (30), and within days "a gentleman carrying a gun; with two pointers playing round him ... put down his gun and ran to [Marianne's] assistance" (42). Austen was presumably well aware of the traditional opening days, as her brothers, particularly Henry, frequently arranged their visits to the country to coincide with the field sports seasons, whether when she lived at

Steventon with her parents, or later at Chawton, with her mother and Cassandra. (12) This is a pattern in Austen's fiction; the men who hunt and shoot first encounter the central female characters in the country, be it at the Dashwoods' Barton Cottage or the Bennetts' estate at Longbourn, in *Pride and Prejudice*.

When the Dashwoods' relative and landlord, Sir John Middleton, a hunting enthusiast, hears of Willoughby's helping Marianne, his description of Willoughby being "As good a kind of fellow as ever lived ... A very decent shot, and there is no bolder rider in England" (43) shows Sir John judges a sportsman's character by his sporting abilities. When a frustrated Marianne presses Sir John for more details regarding Willoughby's "manners," "pursuits," "talents," and "genius" (43-44), Sir John can only reply, "I do not know much about him as to all that. But he is a pleasant, good humoured fellow, and has got the nicest little black bitch of a pointer I ever saw. Was she out with him to-day" (44). Like Squire Western in Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Sir John can no better judge the manners, or the moral character, of a gentleman who hunts, and consequently steer young Marianne away from pursuing Willoughby than Squire Western could separate his admiration for Tom Jones, the huntsman and carouser, from Tom Jones, the gentleman who will pursue the Squire's own daughter, Sophie. As Marianne's sister Elinor later points out regarding Willoughby, who has already ruined and abandoned one young woman, "It was selfishness which first made [Willoughby] sport with your affections" (351).

David Selwyn asserts in *Jane Austen and Leisure* (1999) that Willoughby "remains at heart the predatory male, as destructive to women as he is to game. When he enters a drawing room he brings his hunting instincts with him; and when he sits by Marianne's side at Barton Cottage his favourite pointer is at her feet" (97-98). Willoughby's subsequent pursuit of and marriage to the wealthy Sophia Grey leads to much grief for Marianne, including a severe snub at a party in London (176), and also leads Sir John to cut Willoughby socially, though he still calls him "a good-natured fellow" and believes there is not "a bolder rider in all of England" (214). Of course, perhaps Sir John did judge a part of Willoughby's character correctly in emphasizing his boldness. While Marianne and Elinor are eventually rewarded with marriages to men of more sense in Colonel Brandon and Edward Ferrars, respectively, the Willoughby hunting plot recedes, and the theme of sense triumphing over sensibilities becomes foregrounded. Although Willoughby's confession of his past sins and his assertion to Elinor that he had truly loved Marianne seem to temper her view of him (13) more than Selwyn's labelling him as a "predatory male" does. Austen concludes *Sense and Sensibility* with a final shot at Willoughby, the somewhat less bold huntsman who finds "in his breed of horses and dogs, and in sporting of every kind ... no inconsiderable degree of domestic felicity" (379). Austen's ironic tone is hard at work, as Willoughby finds "domestic felicity" in his horses, dogs, and implicitly, in

his guns, but no apparent domestic bliss in his marriage to a woman of 50,000 pounds (194).

If the hunting plot lays a false trail in terms of eventual romantic matches in *Sense and Sensibility*, that is certainly not the case in *Pride and Prejudice*, for September brings the arrival of eventual Bennet suitors Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy, presumably to shoot as well as to dance, among the more sporting activities, as Bingley will "take possession [of Netherfield Park] before Michaelmas" (3), or in other words, before Sept. 29. Admittedly, the only early reference to field sports in the novel is uttered by a young brother of Elizabeth Bennet's friend Charlotte Lucas who claims, "If I were as rich as Mr. Darcy ... I would keep a pack of fox hounds, & drink a bottle of wine every day" (20). But when Bingley and Darcy return at the end of the novel to Netherfield, again in September, "to shoot there for several weeks" (331), they both have more than shooting on their minds. Mrs. Bennet, who is hoping to rekindle Bingley's interest in daughter Jane but does not consider his wealthier shooting companion Darcy as suitable for daughter Elizabeth, foreshadows, ironically, both marriages when she says to Bingley,

'When you have killed all your birds ... I beg you will come here, and shoot as many as you please, on Mr. Bennet's manor. I am sure he will save all the best of the covies for you.' (337)

While Bingley does go partridge shooting with Mr. Bennet on his estate (14), both he and Darcy will convince the best of Mr. Bennet's covey, his elder daughters, to marry them. In fact, Bingley proposes after staying to dinner following the shooting with Mr. Bennet, a shoot on which Jane's father found, "There was nothing of presumption or folly in Bingley, that could provoke his ridicule or disgust him into silence" (346), high praise coming from Mr. Bennet, actually. According to the *The Sportsman's Companion*, first published in 1781, two gentlemen is the ideal number for hunting partridge and larger parties prove "unsociable." (15) Because Bingley and Mr. Bennet, two gentlemen, shoot together and, implicitly, converse, shooting in *Pride and Prejudice* provides a means for men to judge each other's character better than it did in *Sense and Sensibility*, for Sir John judges Willoughby solely on his abilities as a sportsman.

A different character, Wickham, fills the Willoughby role in *Pride and Prejudice*. Though he initially attempts to "attach" Elizabeth and succeeds in slandering Darcy, with whose sister he had previously attempted to elope, Wickham aims high for an heiress, but carrying debts, including gambling ones (16), hits low, eloping with the young and unaccomplished Bennet daughter Lydia, who will claim, after their marriage, that Wickham will "kill more birds on the first of September, than any body else in the country" (318). That she makes this claim only days before Mrs. Bennet

invites Bingley to "shoot as many [birds] as you please" is not insignificant. Nor is the fact that Elizabeth, like Marianne, misreads both Wickham, positively, and Darcy, negatively, based on outward appearance and manners. As Jocelyn Harris has pointed out, Elizabeth "must later blame herself for not perceiving that [Wickham] is a seducer, a vengeful friend, a gamester, and a fortune hunter." (17)

If hunting and shooting seem the primary country sports for men and therefore a central plot device, which can support key themes in Austen's novels, walking, dancing, and, for some, riding provide opportunities for exercise for both her male and female characters. More importantly, it provides another opportunity for romantic attraction. While Jane Bennet's riding to Netherfield provides some exercise, it is primarily part of Mrs. Bennet's successful plan for Jane to catch cold in the rain and be forced to extend her visit, and therefore her influence on Bingley, for several days. But Elizabeth's walking the three miles to Netherfield in the mud, surely more strenuous exercise than Jane's riding, definitely sparks the interest of Darcy, in part because physical exercise enhances Elizabeth's beauty. Though she begins walking with her other sisters towards the village of Meryton, "Elizabeth continue[s] her walk alone, crossing field after field at a quick pace, jumping over stiles and springing over puddles in impatient activity, and finding herself at last within view of the house, with weary ankles, dirty stockings, and a face glowing with the warmth of exercise" (32). Elizabeth's "quick pace," her "jumping over" stiles and "springing over" puddles, as well as her "impatient activity," all provide ample evidence of the athletic nature of this cross-country jaunt and make the glow of "the warmth of exercise" understandable. That Bingley's sisters will hold her "in contempt" (33) for walking "so early" "in such dirty weather" (32), Elizabeth quickly divines. But for Darcy, who had earlier been attracted to Elizabeth's "pair of fine eyes in the face of a pretty woman" (27), Elizabeth's exertions increase her attraction, for he admires "the brilliancy which exercise had given her complexion" (33), though he doubts if visiting her sick sister justifies "her coming so far alone" (33).

Although Darcy complains to his friend that Elizabeth's walking so far alone shows "an abominable sort of conceited independence" and an "indifference to decorum," Bingley rightly points out that it instead shows a "pleasing affection for her sister." And when teased by Miss Bingley about Elizabeth's eyes, Darcy reverts to increased admiration of Elizabeth's physical beauty thanks to her brisk unaccompanied walk, remarking that her eyes "were brightened by the exercise" (36). (18) Of course, in the end, Elizabeth's beauty and her independence of mind, in spite of his pride and her prejudice, will lead to a wedding for this couple as well as for Jane and Bingley. By no coincidence, on the second of two long walks after the September return of Darcy and his friend "to shoot," Elizabeth accepts Darcy's renewed proposal.

Progress towards their developing a true understanding of each other begins with the airing of their differences when Darcy first proposed to her and continues with the long letter he hands her--while she "indulge[s]" the need for "air and exercise"--a letter which explains his actions regarding Wickham and admits he exhibited excessive pride in the manner of his proposal. Further progress towards reconciling their differences comes when they encounter each other after Elizabeth, properly accompanied this time by her aunt and uncle Gardiner, has been visiting Darcy's Pemberley Estate, in the belief Darcy is not yet in residence. But, of course, he arrives just as they are about to walk the grounds of the estate. The time is July (238), so Darcy cannot impress in "a shooting-jacket" as Willoughby first impressed Marianne (43), nor can he be leading his own "foxhounds" (19) as Charlotte's young brother imagined he should. Darcy still manages, subtly, to show his sporting spirit in discussing fishing with Mr. Gardiner, inviting him to fish the estate, and even "pointing out those parts of the stream where there was usually the most sport" (255). When Mr. Gardiner later fishes with Darcy and "some of the gentlemen [visiting] at Pemberley," and Elizabeth and Mrs. Gardiner pay a visit on Darcy's sister, Georgiana, while the "fishing scheme" (266) is taking place, Darcy leaves the fishing party "only on learning that" (268) Elizabeth is again at Pemberley. Though Austen does not describe Darcy as glowing from exercise, once again sport plays a part in their encounters. While Selwyn claims in *lane Austen and Leisure* that Darcy, in spite of references to his shooting, "is not shown as a sportsman, and, as with all Jane Austen's central male figures, such activities are made little of" (91), I feel the subtle links are to be found in *Pride and Prejudice*. Thematically, sport, particularly hunting, but also fishing and other forms of exercise, such as walking and even dancing, intertwines with the developing romance of the main characters.

Because its main story centers on the town of Bath, the third of Austen's early novels, *Northanger Abbey* (1818), (20) reverses the September romance formula, as this novel opens "after Christmas vacation" (33), when as General Tilney complains later, "it was such a dead time of year, no wildfowl, no game" (209) to be had, so the sportsmen have gone to town! The prominent sportsmen in this novel are General Tilney and John Thorpe, the braggart brother of Catherine Moreland's new acquaintance, Isabella. Thorpe wastes little time trying to impress Catherine with his sporting prowess:

He told her of horses which he had bought for a trifle and sold for incredible sums; of racing matches, in which his judgment had infallibly foretold the winner; of shooting parties, in which he had killed more birds (though without having one good shot) than all his companions together; and described to her some famous day's sport, with the foxhounds, in which his foresight and skill in directing the dogs had repaired the mistakes of the most experienced huntsmen, and in which the boldness of his riding, though it had never

endangered his own life for a moment had been constantly leading others into difficulties, which he calmly concluded had broken the necks of many. (66)

A precursor to the sporting egos of Ring Lardner's characters Jack Keefe and Alibi Ike, Thorpe's exaggerated sense of self, "leading others into difficulties, which he calmly concluded had broken the necks of many," shows Austen at her satirical best and is reminiscent of her more playful comments in letters about what "Bad sports" her brothers are when they fail to bag any birds. Certainly, the sporting men are being "sent up" in this comic novel, which more famously skewers the sensational gothic romances of Ann Radcliffe. Later, Thorpe will also claim to have beaten General Tilney, "one of the best players we have [in Bath]" at billiards "by making one of the cleanest strokes that perhaps ever was made in the world" (96). Neither Thorpe nor the General becomes as treacherous a sportsman as Willoughby or Wickham, even if "the strange unseasonableness" of the General's "morning walks" bodes ill (187) to Catherine and contributes to her thinking he is the sinister "Montoni" (187) of *Mysteries of Udolpho* (21) fame.

Catherine Morland's love interest, and eventual husband, the General's son Henry Tilney does not brag about his sporting accomplishments, though he does apparently shoot, for a "dark little room, owning Henry's authority" at Northanger Abbey is "strewed with his litter of books, guns, and great coats" (183). Henry takes walks with Catherine and more significantly dances with her. Austen's own letters from Bath frequently refer to walks she took and dances she attended, (22) so it is not surprising that Catherine Morland and her new friends will indulge in these pastimes as well. Perhaps, Catherine's early preference for cricket and "base ball" has paid off nicely for her in Bath, as her athleticism is noted by General Tilney when he "admirjes] the elasticity of her walk, which correspond[s] exactly with the spirit of her dancing" (103). Henry Tilney has "a good figure of a man" (76), according to John Thorpe, who talks to Catherine as she and Henry are formed in the line of dance partners. Henry's response to Thorpe is of a quite different nature for, according to Henry, Thorpe

"had no business to withdraw the attention of my partner from me. We have entered into a contract of mutual agreeableness for the space of an evening, and all our agreeableness belongs solely to each other for that time," adding, "I consider a country-dance as an emblem of marriage. Fidelity and compliance are the principal duties of both; and those men who do not chuse to dance or marry themselves, have no business with the partners or wives of their neighbors." (76)

Henry's comparison of dancing partners to marriage ones underlines a central plotting device in most of Austen's fiction: that dancing and taking walks provide key sociable opportunities for couples to know and come to love each other, for both provide the

opportunity for private or at least semiprivate conversation. That both involve the kinds of physical activity, which are more socially acceptable "sporting" pursuits for women in Austen's time than cricket, base ball or shooting is not insignificant. That "Catherine's spirits danced within her, as she danced in her chair all the way home" (81) after this night of dancing, and while anticipating taking "a country walk" (81) the next day with Henry and his sister, is no great surprise.

Just as Henry and Catherine become better acquainted through dancing, so too did Darcy and Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*, though their conversation is a bit more testy, as when Elizabeth asserts they are both "of an unsocial, taciturn disposition, unwilling to speak, unless we expect to say something that will amaze the whole room, and be handed down to posterity with all the eclat of a proverb" (91). This first dance of Elizabeth and Darcy will be praised for its elegance, as Sir William Lucas observes to Darcy that, "Such superior dancing is not often seen. It is evident that you belong to the first circles [of society]. Allow me to say, however, that your fair partner does not disgrace you" (92). Sir William's compliments of the dancers as a couple underscore their fitness for one another. At the end of their second dance, though Elizabeth, who has needled Darcy regarding his supposed slights of Wickham, is "dissatisfied" (94), Darcy's dissatisfaction is in a different manner, "for in Darcy's breast there was a powerful feeling towards her, which soon procured her pardon" (94). As Jocelyn Harris observes in discussing *Emma* (1816), "Austen never deviates from the perception that those who dance well together are well matched" (62).

With *Mansfield Park* (1816), the first of three novels written and published after 1810, Austen breaks from the sporting season/non-sporting season beginning by providing a history of the Bertram family and their relations. Hunting and shooting on this large estate are certainly activities pursued by a number of the gentlemen and their acquaintances, but, to me, it plays a less important role regarding courtship themes than it did in either *Sense and Sensibility* or *Pride and Prejudice*. Sir Thomas Bertram and his sons, Tom and Edmund, participate in field sports, as do his daughter Maria's fiancé, James Rushworth, and Henry Crawford, a relation of the rector of Mansfield. "The approach of September [brings] tidings of [Tom] first in a letter to the gamekeeper," and he arrives "by the end of August," (23) just in time for partridge season; Mr. Rushworth will bore Maria with his exploits as she is "doomed to repeated details of his day's sport, good or bad" (115); and Henry Crawford, "after sending for [his] hunters," will claim, he is "grown too old to go out [hunting] more than three times a week ... though I should be happy to do both [walk and ride], but that would be exercise only to my body, and I must take care of my mind" (229). Since he will be bored the other days of the week, he claims he will "make Fanny Price [Sir Thomas's niece] in love with [him]" (229), so in a sense the hunter romance

sub-plot is still alive and well in Austen's fourth novel, though Henry Crawford will fail in his quest.

Fanny, the central female character, and concern for and the desire to improve her health and stamina are a repeated topic in the novel, with exercise the supposed cure through walking and horse-back riding. Because she is essentially a "poor relation," the daughter of an estranged sister of Lady Bertram, whom Sir Thomas has condescended to raise in his household, her welfare has been less a concern of her aunt than of her uncle. Consequently, when Edmund recommends Fanny have her own horse, there is resistance, for as Mrs. Norris, another aunt, comments, "She could not but consider it as absolutely unnecessary, and even improper, that Fanny should have a regular lady's horse of her own in the style of her cousins" (36), thus emphasizing a distinction in class rank between Fanny and Edmund's two sisters. In such subtle ways, Austen's style develops in her final three novels with sport used as an integral part of it. Edmund perseveres and, though he already has two hunters and a third "useful for road-riding" (37), he exchanges the third horse "for one his cousin might ride" (37). Fanny has traded up from "an old grey poney" to a "treasure" of a mare of which Edmund puts her "in full possession" (37). Naturally, well-tuned Austen readers scent, in cousin Edmund's solicitousness on Fanny's behalf, the potential for romance, but it will be a long time coming in *Mansfield Park*, for Austen stirs the pot with the arrival of Henry Crawford, who plays a game of "making Fanny love him," and his sister Mary, who becomes a romantic distraction for Edmund, in part through her new-found talent in, of all things, horseback riding!

Since Mary has no horse of her own, she shares Fanny's, and though the first lesson given by Edmund causes "no inconvenience to Fanny" (66), as she can still take her routine ride, the second lesson takes much longer because "Miss Crawford's enjoyment of riding was such, that she did not know how to leave off" (66). As in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Northanger Abbey*, sport enhances the physical attractiveness of a woman and, consequently, her romantic potential:

Active and fearless, and, though rather small, strongly made, [Miss Crawford] seemed formed for a horsewoman; and to the pure genuine pleasure of the exercise, something was probably added in Edmund's attendance and instructions, and something more in the conviction of very much surpassing her sex in general by early progress, to make her unwilling to dismount. Fanny was ready and waiting, and Mrs. Norris was beginning to scold her for not being gone, and still no horse was announced, no Edmund appeared. (66-67)

If suspicions are raised in Fanny because "no horse" and "no Edmund" appear, they are only increased when she finally looks for the two riders and discovers they are performing before spectators, for "a happy party" of "Mr. and Mrs. Grant, and Mr.

Crawford, with two or three grooms" all "standing about and looking on" as Edmund and Miss Crawford,

both on horseback, riding side by side ... at her apparent suggestion ... rose into a canter; and to Fanny's timid nature it was most astonishing to see how well she sat. After a few moments they stopt entirely, Edmund was close to her, he was speaking to her, he was evidently directing her management of the bridle, he had hold of her hand; she saw it, or the imagination supplied what the eye could not reach. She must not wonder at all this; what could be more natural than that Edmund should be making himself useful, and proving his good-nature by any one? She could not but think indeed that Mr. Crawford might as well have saved him the trouble; that it would have been particularly proper and becoming in a brother to have done it himself, but Mr. Crawford, with all his boasted good-nature, and all his coachmanship, probably knew nothing of the matter, and had no active kindness in comparison of Edmund. She began to think it rather hard on the poor mare to have such double duty; if she were forgotten, the poor mare should be remembered. (67-68)

Mary Crawford's apparent natural abilities (24)--she grew up in London so has not ridden before--her activity, fearlessness, strength; her seeming to be "formed for a horsewoman" and her willingness to, as Fanny perceives it, take the initiative--they canter "at her apparent suggestion"; and then Edmund's seeming to touch her hand in teaching the use of the bridle, when Fanny thinks it more proper for brother Henry to provide such instruction: all these details, in essence, provide a striking example of how sport underscores theme in this novel. Edmund is developing a physical attraction, a sexual attraction implied in touching hands, that Fanny seems unable, or unwilling, to compete with, being too "timid." Yet, typical of her character, she will divert her attention to "the poor mare" who "should be remembered" even if Fanny and her appointed riding practice have been forgotten by Edmund. While it is Mary's nature to be bold and to use her attractiveness, it is in Fanny's nature, and implicitly in her knowledge of her social position at Mansfield Park, that she will begin riding less so Mary can ride more, for as she tells Edmund, "You know I am strong enough now to walk very well" (70).

Walking for exercise plays a part in Mansfield Park, as when the Bertrams, the Crawfords, Fanny, and the Rushworths all walk the grounds of Rushworth's estate, Sotherton, with Fanny, of course, becoming separated from the others and found sitting to rest (101); dancing will play its part, again with Fanny ordered to rest by Sir Thomas, because he has "seen her rather walk than dance down the shortening set, breathless and with her hand at her side" (279). But the sporting moment most central to the romantic plots of this novel is during the card game "Speculation," in which the romantic plots--Edmund/Mary; Edmund/Fanny; Henry/Fanny--are played out in a

fantastic scene, about which Selwyn rightly asserts that, "Nowhere else in the novels is a card-game used with the skill and subtlety that Jane Austen shows in this scene" (275). Because of its nature as a bidding game, Speculation, a game Austen had taught her nephews in 1808 and bantered with them about in her letters (25) is an apt game for Henry Crawford to teach and Fanny to learn, for Henry is a manipulator and Fanny the least likely of the players to want to beat others through guile. Henry tries to "inspirit her play, sharpen her avarice, and harden her heart" (240), to boost her willingness to defeat the others including her brother William, who is visiting Mansfield Park for the first time. Crawford's skill at the game reflects his personality, for he is "in high spirits, doing every thing with happy ease, and pre-eminent in all the lively turns, quick resources, and playful impudence that could do honour to the game" (240). When the game turns on bidding for Fanny's queen, Henry tries to dissuade her from selling it to William, saying "the game was hers." But Edmund, with better insight into her character, retorts, with a smile, "And Fanny would much rather [the game] were William's ... Poor Fanny! not allowed to cheat herself as she wishes" (244). In the end of the novel, of course, Austen does not allow her to "cheat herself" of accepting Edmund over Henry either!

Meanwhile, Mary Crawford, who likes Edmund but is less than enthusiastic about being the wife of a rector not interested in a life of leisure, must listen to her brother's probing Edmund about grand improvements Henry would make to Edmund's residence at Thornton Lacey. This leads Edmund to respond that he will only make small changes to give it "the air of a gentleman's residence," changes he hopes "may suffice all who care about me" (242). Immediately, "Miss Crawford, a little suspicious of a certain tone of voice and a certain half-look attending the last expression of his hope" (242), makes a hasty move in the card game, "exclaim[ing], 'There, I will stake my last like a woman of spirit. No cold prudence for me. I am not born to sit still and do nothing. If I lose the game, it shall not be from not striving for it.'" (243). That game, as Austen's narrator tells us "was her's (sic), and only did not pay her for what she had given to secure it" (243). It is the beginning of the end for the romance between Edmund and Mary, for though she plays her game as boldly as she strides a horse, her unwillingness to "sit still and do," as she sees it, "nothing" makes her unsuitable as the wife of a pragmatic rector who will make do with creating the "air of a gentleman" without fancying himself more. Fanny will fill that role nicely and find more to do than "sit and do nothing."

The word-games, from charades to riddles and playing jumble with alphabet blocks to the Box Hill game of telling Miss Woodgate "one thing very clever ... or three things very dull indeed" (26) are so central to Emma that many critics have written about the topic extensively. (27) I find it interesting that Emma, on whose name Mr. Weston will create a "conundrum" (371) 28 is much more engaged by word games than card

games, beginning with encouraging Harriet Smith to collect charades and riddles, and later, by participating actively in the alphabet game Frank Churchill begins, as well as the Box Hill ones. Significant as well is Mr. George Knightley, who is not a game player, not even, as far as one can tell, a sportsman (29), yet he can apparently solve puzzles better than Emma. When Emma tries to show her wit at Box Hill, for example, by reminding local spinster Miss Bates that she must limit herself to only three dull things to say (30), Mr. Knightley waits until the right moment to reprimand Emma and does not hesitate to show why her wit should not come at the cost of shaming Miss Bates, who is far below Emma and Mr. Knightley in class: "How could you be so insolent in your wit to a woman of her character, age, and situation? Emma, I had not thought it possible" (374). Mr. Knightley also seems to come closest in the community of Highbury to solving the riddle of the behavior of Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax, who must disguise their engagement and feign indifference so Frank's benefactress, Lady Churchill, another wealthy relative raising an estranged sister's child, will not object to their betrothal.

Emma may be able to solve the jumbled word "Dixon" and at least see Frank teasing Miss Fairfax about a possible romantic connection in her life, but she cannot know the joke is really on her, since she suspects the wrong party of being romantically involved with Jane. But this same word game leads Mr. Knightley to suspect a secret relationship does exist between Frank and Jane, for "These letters were but the vehicle for gallantry and trick. It was a child's play, chosen to conceal a deeper game on Frank Churchill's part" (348). Knightley's suspicions increase when Frank displays words for only Jane to see, a message with more meaning, as was his earlier spelling of "blunder," which when Harriet solved it, caused Jane to "blush" (348), because Frank had blundered earlier in mentioning something Jane had written him privately in a letter. Jane "sweeps away" his final attempt to communicate with her through the medium of a game, but according to the Austen family, the letters "which she swept away unread, contained the word 'pardon'" (Austen-Leigh 158). Once again, sport, here in the form of word games, is essential to developing both social and romantic themes in Emma. (31)

Emma seems to dislike card games such as the whist and piquet her father often plays, (32) as well as the game nights Mr. Elton and his "whist-club" partners have at The Crown, though she is happy to arrange card evenings for Mr. Woodhouse when she wants to attend an evening party (211). Jane Austen herself seems to have preferred the more social games, the "round games" such as Speculation and Brag, to more quiet card games such as whist. In a letter of 1801 from Bath, she complains to Cassandra, "Another stupid party last night ... only just enough to make one card table, with six people to look over, & talk nonsense to each other. Ly Fust, Mrs. Busby & a Mrs. Owen sat down with my Uncle to Whist within five minutes after the

three old Toughs came in ... I cannot anyhow continue to find people agreeable" (85-86). In 1813, she again writes Cassandra, "As soon as a whist party was formed & a round Table threatened, I made my Mother an excuse, & came away" (199). Emma's negative association with "card-tables" and whist, in particular, may derive in part from Austen's own attitude. But Austen uses that same attitude to help develop the most important of "sporting" scenes in this novel of word play, at a ball.

The Westons, along with their son, Frank Churchill, Emma, and others, have planned a ball at The Crown for some time and included a "card-room" adjacent to the ball room, where Emma willingly consigns "the husbands, and fathers and whist players" (325), for they are no longer young and eligible, even if she has repeatedly said in the novel she does not intend to marry. (33) Mr. Knightley attends because of his friendships within the community as well as his position in the community, but he confesses to Emma beforehand that he "would rather be at home, looking over William Larkin's week's account; much rather, I confess--Pleasure in seeing dancing--not I, indeed--I never look at it--I do not know who does--Fine dancing, I believe, like virtue, must be its own reward. Those who are standing by are usually thinking of something very different" (257-58). He does not plan to watch the dancers, nor does he wish to dance, although by rank and wealth he is the most eligible bachelor in Highbury. Yet, when Emma is dancing with Frank Churchill, it is Mr. Knightley who draws her attention:

There he was, among the standers-by, where he ought not to be; he ought to be dancing--not classing himself with the husbands, and fathers and whist-players who were pretending to feel an interest in the dance till their rubbers were made up--so young he looks--He could not have appeared to greater advantage perhaps any where, than where he placed himself. His tall, firm upright figure, among the bulky forms and stooping shoulders of the elderly men, was such as Emma felt must draw everybody's eyes ... He moved a few steps nearer, and those few steps were enough to prove in how gentlemanlike a manner, with what natural grace, he must have danced, would he but take the trouble ... He seemed often observing her. (325-26)

In this critical scene in the novel, for it is the beginning of the romantic pairing of Emma and Mr. Knightley, her brother-in-law, Emma sees him standing "with the husbands, and fathers and whist-players," but she does not consign him to that group "pretending to feel an interest" in the dance when they really just want to adjourn to the card room like "so many toughs," as Jane Austen puts it in her 1813 letter to Cassandra. Nor does he wish to be consigned to the card room: "He seemed often observing her." His fitness for dancing ties Mr. Knightley to another "tall, upright figure" in Austen fiction, Mr. Darcy. But the more mature Knightley shows no superior pride. His "gentleman like manner" and "natural grace," coupled with his

looking "young" in spite of his being in his thirties, make Mr. Knightley, Emma feels, able to "draw everyone's eyes."

Austen deliberately contrasts Knightley with Mr. Elton, newly married for money after being jilted by Emma herself. When Elton, who is a mere twenty-seven, is entreated by Mrs. Weston to dance with Harriet Smith, he rudely ignores the request, claiming he is "an old married man" (327) as an excuse, though he was ready to dance with Mrs. Weston or Mrs. Gilbert a moment before. Mr. Elton soon "retreat[s] to the card room, looking (Emma trusted) very foolish" (328). This "old married man" is turning into a "tough" rather quickly. And Mr. Knightley, having observed Elton's snub of Miss Smith, whom Emma once thought the "target" of Elton's "court-ship" charade when, in fact, it was aimed at Emma, will happily see Knightley dancing with Harriet instead. As David Selwyn points out, in this scene, "For the first time [Emma] is aware of [Mr. Knightley] as an attractive man; and it is at this moment that her love for him may be said to begin" (158). In fact, they dance before the ball is done, for as Emma points out, "we are not really so much brother and sister as to make it at all improper," to which he replies, "Brother and sister! no, indeed" (331).

As in *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*, sport cleverly yet subtly supports key themes in Austen's final novel, *Persuasion*. Shooting plays a more vital role again, particularly through the character of Charles Musgrove, an avid sportsman who has sympathy for the novel's heroine, Anne Elliot, not simply because he is married to her sister Mary but also because he courted Anne first. Country walks and walks in Bath as well as sporting behavior at Lyme Regis play roles in developing not only plot but also the courtship themes, among others.

Charles Musgrove, who "did nothing with much zeal, but sport" (34), is the most eager huntsman in the later novels and has been labeled an obsessive sportsman, (35) but his sporting "zeal" serves a useful purpose. It brings together protagonist Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth, the man she loved and was persuaded by others to reject when they were both young. Wentworth has come to visit his sister, Mrs. Sophia Croft, whose husband, an Admiral, has just rented Kellynch Hall, the Elliot estate, from

Anne's father, Sir Walter. Since Admiral Croft takes possession in September (36), i.e., early in the shooting season, Wentworth and Musgrove go shooting several times, and consequently involve Anne and Wentworth in several brief and somewhat awkward encounters at Musgrove's cottage. Anne's impression of the Musgrove household when she joins them to help Mary with her children certainly seems shaped by the fact she arrives at the beginning of the season for field sports. Anne's impression of the daily life of the Musgrove families is that Charles and his father "had their own game to guard, and to destroy; their own horses, dogs, and newspapers

to engage them; and the females were fully occupied in all the other common subjects of house-keeping, neighbours, dress, dancing, and music" (42-43). Though the comment regarding guarding and destroying "game" might not be the most complimentary description of maintaining game on an estate, it does have a tone reminiscent of Austen's jokes in her early letters about her brothers' sporting pursuits. Anne comes from a household where her father and sister Elizabeth are far too interested in social standing and elitism so that Anne actually seems to relish her time with the Musgroves, for in reflecting on the dichotomy of male and female pursuits at the Uppercross estate, Anne "acknowledge[s] to be very fitting, that every little social commonwealth should dictate its own matters of discourse; and hope[s], ere long, to become a not unworthy member of the one she was now transported into" (43). The more congenial environs of the Musgrove family, in spite of Mary's constant complaining--"Charles is out shooting. I have not seen him since seven o'clock ... He said he should not stay out long; but he has never come back, and now it is almost one!" (37)--helps Anne, for "She was always on friendly terms with her brother-in-law; and in the children ... she had an object of interest, amusement, and wholesome exertion" (43). In fact, seeing Anne in these environs and coming to rely on her in a time of stress at Lyme Regis helps rekindle Wentworth's romantic interest in the woman who jilted him but has never stopped loving him.

Austen establishes the romance plot of rekindling love between Anne and Wentworth through a series of brief sporting events, though their sporting character might seem a stretch at times. Shooting with Charles and Charles' coming "for the dogs" lead to brief encounters even if "their visitor" only "bow[s] and [is] gone" (59). Another time, a Musgrove child looking for "some play" (79) and climbing on Anne's back, refusing to get off, though Anne is tending to his sick sibling, allows Wentworth to rescue her. The child had "bent down [Anne's] head so much, that his little sturdy hands were unfastened from around her neck, and he was resolutely borne away" (80). This was surely not what Anne had in mind in anticipating "wholesome exertion" with the children. This event leaves Anne with "most disordered feelings" (80), which require "a long application of solitude and reflection to recover her" (81).

A more significant scene occurs a few days later, when a long walk is proposed by Charles's younger sisters, both of whom seem enamored with the dashing Wentworth, of course. Mary, who is "fond of a long walk" (83), and Anne agree to accompany the sisters, but this women's country walk changes dynamically when Charles and Wentworth return unexpectedly from hunting because "a young dog" had "spoilt their sport, and sent them back early" (83). Anne sets out with the others, but her "object [is] not to be in the way of any body" and on narrow paths "to keep with her brother and sister." She resolves that, "Her pleasure in the walk must arise from the exercise and the day, from the view of the last smiles of the year upon the tawny leaves and

withered hedges" (84). Anne prescribes in a sense "exercise" and Romantic contemplation of the landscape as an antidote to worrying about whether Wentworth is "attaching" himself to one of the Musgrove girls. On first hearing that Wentworth's sister was moving to Kellynch Hall, Anne had taken "many a stroll and many a sigh" before she could "dispel the agitation of the idea" (50). On this long walk, she is not so successful, for much as the walk at Sotherton in Mansfield Park left Fanny tired and resting while various couples, including "her" Edmund and Mary Crawford, ranged through the grounds (37), Anne will sit and rest by a hedgerow, only to hear a somewhat tender conversation between Wentworth and Louisa Musgrove. (38) But as the group reunites for the long walk home, Wentworth again intervenes on Anne's behalf, insisting she ride partway home with Admiral Croft and his wife in their gig, for she is tired. This gesture and his helping her into the cart affect her considerably, for she feels "he had placed her there, that his will and his hands had done it, that she owed it to his perception of her fatigue" (91). Of course, in typical Austen fashion, Anne does not completely read his intentions and sees them as "an impulse of pure, though unacknowledged friendship" (91), nothing more.

Even when a crisis occurs on an overnight trip of the Musgrove party to Lyme Regis, Anne does not recognize the full significance of Wentworth's renewed feelings for her. Louisa Musgrove's youth is emphasized on this trip, a youthful joy in exercise not seen in Austen's work since Marianne Dashwood and Elizabeth Bennet raced their sisters, but Louisa's "jumping" leads to near tragedy. The group, which of course includes Anne and Wentworth, has been walking the countryside around Lyme and now visits its Cobb:

There was too much wind to make the high part of the new Cobb pleasant for the ladies, and they agreed to get down the steps to the lower, and all were contented to pass quietly and carefully down the steep flight, excepting Louisa; she must be jumped down them by Captain Wentworth. In all their walks, he had had to jump her from the stiles; the sensation was delightful to her. The hardness of the pavement for her feet, made him less willing upon the present occasion; he did it, however; she was safely down, and instantly, to shew her enjoyment, ran up the steps to be jumped down again. He advised her against it, thought the jar too great; but no, he reasoned and talked in vain; she smiled and said, "I am determined I will:" he put out his hands; she was too precipitate by half a second, she fell on the pavement on the Lower Cobb, and was taken up lifeless. (109)

Louisa's innocent play has led to a disaster, for she lies unconscious and takes weeks of nursing to recover. Her childish game surely hints she is not the woman for Captain Wentworth, for he has privately told his sister he prefers a woman with "a strong mind, with sweetness of manner" (62), a description of Anne more than anyone. And it is Anne who takes charge at this moment, (39) leading Wentworth to insist Anne

should stay with Louisa in Lyme, for there is "no one so proper, no one so capable as Anne" (114).

As in each Austen novel, many misunderstandings between couples must be smoothed over before an end is in sight, but keeping in spirit with the rest of the novel, sport continues to play its supporting role in *Persuasion*, and in revising a "cancelled chapter," preserved and printed by Edward Austen-Leigh in his *Memoir of Jane Austen* (177-191), Austen, through Charles Musgrove, keeps a sporting connection intact throughout the novel. (40) In the original version, Anne's reconciling with Captain Wentworth occurs when the Crofts come to town, in their townhouse because of a convenient rainstorm. But, in the revised version, the Musgroves have come to Bath, "by way of doing something, as the shooting season was now over " (216), and Anne again finds the company of their family more congenial than her own. In this version rain sends Anne to the White Hart and the Musgroves, who happen to be entertaining Captain Wentworth and a friend.

Wentworth, wishing to renew his proposal but fearing she may be attached to her cousin William, contrives to leave Anne a note asking that she by "a word" or "look" (238) convey her feelings, but she has no chance to do so until later, when Charles Musgrove is escorting her through Bath. Wentworth has joined them and Charles, sportsman, and in my view, gentleman, to the last, uses the excuse of "an engagement at a gunsmith's" to leave the two alone so he can see a gun, he tells Wentworth, "a good deal like the second-sized double-barrel of mine, which you shot with one day, round Winthrop" (240). Charles, unlike his sporting devotee predecessors Sir William of *Sense and Sensibility* and John Thorpe of *Northanger Abbey*, but like a less devoted hunter, Mr. Bennet, can judge a man's character by shooting with him, or as in the case of Captain Benwick, his sister Louisa's new fiance, by rat-hunting with him. (41) Once Charles Musgrove yields the scene, the couple soon renews their engagement, after, of course, having directed their course "towards the comparatively quiet and retired gravel walk" (240), where they can exercise in unanxious peace.

Biographer Claire Tomalin observes that Jane Austen "did not resent having to sew, as some clever women did, but she did notice that, while the ladies of the house were at their sewing, the men went shooting" (125). As in the Musgrove household, the Austen one certainly had brothers who loved to hunt and sisters who remained at home or walked, when weather permitted, on visits and to the local village. David Selwyn asserts further that "on the whole [Austen] has little use for hunting except as a subject of male conversation from which women are excluded ... The hunting field was a male preserve and could supply her with no suitable material for a scene" (105). While the closest to a full hunting scene is Charles Musgrove's description of hunting rats in a barn, with the exception of *Emma*, every published Austen novel includes male characters that pursue field sports, and some of those novels use hunting or

shooting to support their themes, with courtship at the top of the list. According to Penny Gay, Austen was also "a favorite aunt to her nephews and nieces; telling them stories, playing expertly at ... games." (42) Certainly, her nephews' hunting exploits, their "sporting Mania," amused her. When nephews Edward and George stayed with Jane after the death of their mother, Elizabeth Austen, in 1808, she taught them Speculation, took them rowing, and one evening after "the Psalms and Lessons, and a sermon at home, to which they were attentive," she reports to Cassandra that the boys returned to "conundrums the moment it was over" and also that "George is most industriously making and naming paper ships, at which he afterwards shoots with horse-chestnuts, brought from Steventon on purpose" (151). It is my belief that such playfulness and ingenuity, fostered and enjoyed by an aunt who no doubt had seen similar behaviors in her own brothers; by an aunt who no doubt indulged in her own games in her youth; who certainly enjoyed the fruit of the harvest of game, as the letters also suggest, (43) even if she never shot a bird; that all this inspired the writer to include the sporting, the playful life in the world of her novels, not just as an exclusively male world but as part of a world peopled with individuals, some of whom enjoyed dancing, or playing whist, or shooting, walking or riding for "air and exercise," even "jumping" down from stiles or racing a sister down a hill.

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Notes

(1.) Catherine "was fond of all boys' plays and greatly preferred cricket... to dolls" (*Northanger Abbey*, 13).

(2.) "it was not very wonderful that Catherine ... should prefer cricket, base ball, riding on horseback, and running about the country at the age of fourteen, to books" (15).

(3.) Late 18th century and early 19th century handbooks on field sports define "hunting" as hunting on horseback with dog packs (cf. fox-hunting, hare-coursing); "shooting" as hunting on foot, with guns, usually accompanied by pointers or setters. In her novels and letters, Austen uses such terms consistently. Austen's works rarely reference "shooting parties" where beaters would chase game towards an arranged

point for shooters to kill them, except perhaps when John Thorpe claims to have killed more birds than anyone else in "shooting parties" (66).

(4.) Elinor comments to Marianne, "It was selfishness which first made him sport with your affections" (*Sense and Sensibility* 351).

(5.) Tomalin 29.

(6.) For example, cricket is only referenced once in the letters (Jane reporting that Edward Bridges "had been late for the cricket match"); "base ball," not at all (*Letters* 110).

(7.) According to her nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh, "Jane Austen was successful in everything she attempted with her fingers ... Her performances with cup and ball [bibliouquet] were marvelous. The one used at Chawton was an easy one, and she has been known to catch it on the point above an hundred times in succession, till her hand was weary" [*Memoir of Jane Austen* 97-98].

(8.) David Selwyn gives detailed background into their hunting experiences in his chapter on "Outdoor Pursuits" in *Jane Austen and Leisure* (89-114).

(9.) Sept. 1 was the traditional opening day for partridge shooting; Oct. 1, for pheasant; Aug. 12, for grouse (*Chitty* 98).

(10.) *Minor Works* (254).

(11.) A race between sisters occurs in *Pride and Prejudice* as well, when Jane and Elizabeth Bennet race to find their father, who has received an "express letter" regarding their potentially disgraced sister Lydia: "Jane, who was not so light, not so in the habit of running as Elizabeth, soon lagged behind, while her sister, panting for breath, came up with [Mr. Bennet]" [*Pride and Prejudice* 286].

(12.) In a letter dated September 9, 1808, Jane writes, "We want to be settled at Chawton in time for Henry to come to us for the Shooting, in October at least--but a little earlier" (158). On Sept. 15-16, 1813, Jane writes that Henry's "plan is to get a couple days of Pheasant Shooting [at Chawton] and then return directly" to London (218).

(13.) "Willoughby, in spite of all his faults, excited a degree of commiseration for the sufferings produced by them, which made [Elinor] think of him as now separated for ever from her family with a tenderness, a regret, rather in proportion, as she soon acknowledged within herself--to his wishes than to his merits" (333).

(14.) "[B]efore [Bingley] went away, an engagement was formed, chiefly through his own and Mrs. Bennet's means, for his coming next morning to shoot with her husband" (345).

(15.) "I would recommend avoiding a large company of shooting party, two Gentlemen is sufficient to beat the ground together, there may be more of the same party at a distance, and meet occasionally--Three is commonly attended with some degree of hurry and heat, and above that number with guns, is very unsociable, and nothing but confusion can ensue" (Anonymous 26).

(16.) After Wickham's elopement with Lydia, his commanding officer, Colonel Forster, reports that Wickham "had left gaming debts behind him, to a very considerable amount" (29798), debts Darcy will settle as part of the arrangement to force Wickham to actually marry Lydia.

(17.) "Pride and Prejudice and Mansfield Park" in *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen* (42).

(18.) Another instance of Elizabeth running occurs when Miss Bingley and her sister, Mrs. Hurst, attempt to slight Elizabeth on a walk with Darcy during her stay at Netherfield. When Darcy feels "their rudeness" and proposes walking "in the avenue," Elizabeth makes a joke about "the picturesque" and "r[uns] gaily off, rejoicing as she ramble[s] about, in the hope of being at home again in a day or two" (53).

(19.) Fox hunting did not occur in mid-summer as implied by this account from Edward Austen-Leigh: "It happened that on May 6, 1814, after regular hunting had ceased, by some arrangement between the two masters, Mr. Chute's hounds were to have a private meet at Mr. Villebois' cover, Chilton Wood. My father was invited to it [but] ... declined the invitation." (*Recollections of the Early Days of the Vine Hunt and its Founder William John Chute, Esq., MP of the Vine: Together with brief notice of the adjoining hunts* 27).

(20.) The original version, under the title "Susan," was sold for ten pounds in 1803 but never published (*Northanger Abbey* xi).

(21.) The central villain of Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794).

(22.) In a letter to Cassandra from 1801, Austen describes one vigorous walk she took with acquaintance Mrs. Chamberlayne that reveals Austen's competitive spirit: : "Our grand walk to Weston was again fixed for Yesterday, & was accomplished in a very striking manner ... It would have amused you to see our progress--we went up Sion Hill, & returned across the fields--in climbing a hill Mrs. Chamberlayne is very

capital; I could with difficulty keep pace with her--yet would not flinch for the World--on plain ground I was quite her equal--and so we posted away under a fine hot sun, She without any parasol or any shade to her hat, stopping for nothing, & crossing the Church Yard at Weston with much expedition as if we were afraid of being buried alive. After seeing what she is equal to, I cannot help feeling a regard for her (87).

(23.) Mansfield Park (114).

(24.) In Jane Austen, Game Theorist, Michael Chwe comments, "Mary learns so quickly that one suspects she already knows how" (76).

(25.) Jane writes Cassandra that "I introduced speculation, and it was so much approved that we hardly knew how to leave off" (152). When two months later she learns the nephews now prefer a different card game, Brag, to Speculation, she writes "The preference of Brag over Speculation does not greatly surprise me I believe because I feel the same myself; but it mortifies me deeply, because Speculation was under my patronage ... When one comes to reason upon it, it cannot stand its ground against Speculation of which I hope Edward is now convinced. Give my love to him; if he is" (163).

(26.) Proposed of course by the ultimate gamester in this novel, Frank Churchill (370).

(27.) Among others, Selwyn devotes a chapter, "Verses, Riddles, and Puzzles" to Emma, while Linda Bree discusses the subject "Emma: Word Games and Secret Histories" in *A Companion to Jane Austen* (2009).

(28.) "What two letters of the alphabet are there that express perfection ... M and A.--Emma" (371).

(29.) Selwyn points out, George Knightley is "not a solitary, leisured sportsman on a rental property but a busy landowner working closely with his steward and tenant farmer" (93).

(30.) Emma reminds Miss Bates, "Ah! ma'am, but there may be a difficulty. Pardon me--but you will be limited as to number--only three at once" (370).

(31.) Selwyn argues, in fact, regarding the alphabet game that "A game whose purpose is socially cohesive is here divisive: it is played by Frank Churchill and Emma against, rather than with, the others (297). To me, that assertion is much more true of Frank than Emma.

(32.) "There was scarcely an evening in the week in which Emma could not make up a card-table for [Mr. Woodhouse]" (20).

(33.) Emma tells Harriet Smith, "I am not only, not going to be married, at present, but have very little intention of ever marrying at all" (84).

(34.) Persuasion (43).

(35.) Selwyn comments that for Musgrove, "[hunting] is somewhat an obsession" (92).

(36.) "The Crofts were to have possession at Michaelmas" (33).

(37.) Similar scenes occur in Emma with the strawberry picking party at Dunsford Mill and with the picnic at Box Hill.

(38.) In discussing a nut found in the hedgerow, Wentworth tells Louisa the nut is "still in possession of all the happiness that a hazel-nut can be supposed capable of.' Then, returning to his former earnest tone: 'My first wish for all whom I am interested in, is that they should be firm. If Louisa Musgrove would be beautiful and happy in her November of life, she will cherish all her present powers of mind" (88).

(39.) When Wentworth utters, "Is there no one to help me?" in "a tone of despair" (110), Anne takes charge, ordering others to go for a surgeon, after rubbing Louisa's hand and temples and applying smelling salts has no positive effect (110).

(40.) Selwyn comments, "Charles's passion for the sport is brought to its climax when it incongruously provides the opportunity for the hero and heroine to take their joyous walk through Bath together" (92).

(41.) Of Captain Benwick, Charles reports, " He is a brave fellow. I got more acquainted with him last Monday than I ever did before. We had a famous set-to at rat-hunting all the morning, in my father's great barns; and he played his part so well, that I have liked him the better ever since" (219)

(42.) Gay 342.

(43.) In a letter of 1815, while staying in London, Austen reports, "This day has brought a most friendly Letter from Mr. Fowle, with a brace of Pheasants. I did not know before that Henry had written to him a few days ago, to ask for them. We shall live upon Pheasants; no bad Life!" (299).

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